

Glastonbury

SOMERSETSHIRE.

That Buds every Christmas Day in the Morning, and Comes at Noon, and Fades at Night.

Also the LIFE and DEATH of the Holy Virgin

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

That Buried Christ's Body;

*How Buried Here*



*Richard Bennett*

*Richard Bennett his Hand and Seal*

BX2596 G5 F96

A Full and true Account of the MIRACULOUS  
Glastenbury white THORN  
IN  
SOMERSETSHIRE;

That Buds every *Christmas* Day in the Morning; Blossoms at  
Noon, and Fades at Night.

Also the LIFE and DEATH of that Holy Disciple

JOSEPH OF *ARIMATHEA*.

That Buried *Christ's* Body;

*John Evans. 1850*



*Richard Bennett*

*Richard Bennett his hand and pen  
written October 29 1850*



Of the Birth and Education of JOSEPH of ARIMATHEA

CERTAIN it appears, in Ecclesiastical Histories, about the Year of the World 3996 preceeding our B. Saviour's Nativity near eight Revolutions of the Sun, JOSEPH born at, and had his Title from the City of *Arimathea*. it is also called *Ramatha*, formerly a City allotted to, and situated in *Saphim*, upon Mount *Ephraim*, on the Confines of *Benjamin* and *Dan*. It is moreover remarkable for having given Birth to *Saiah* the Prophet, who liv'd, dy'd, and was buried there; but his Bones were afterwards translated out of *Juden*, and found in the Cemetary of *Thrace*, a Territory of *Greece*.

His Father, *Matthias*, was of a great Extraction, but more esteemed for his Justice and Authority in *Jerusalem*, the Metropolis of *Palestine*. JOSEPH's Education was with his Brother *Jonathan*, by the Father's Side; with whom, having a quick Apprehension and retentive Memory, he happily profited in most learned Sciences; so that advancing to his fifteenth Year he not only receiv'd Applause from the Priests and noble Citizens, but they vouchsafed to ask his Opinion of those Things that concerned their Laws and Ordinances, of which he could readily inform them.

When he had carefully examined into the Jewish Sects of *Pharisees*, *Sadducees* and *Essenes*, adhering only to the best and purest, he began to addict himself to a Life of great Severity, Labour and Piety; and hearing of one *Malathi*, a holy Man, who liv'd in the Desert, being clothed with nothing but the Skin of Beasts, and what the Trees afforded; fed on nothing but what the Earth did spontaneously send forth, and bathed himself to preserve his Chastity in the coldest Springs adjacent, both Day and Night, being frequently bless'd with divine Illumination, he went to him, and followed his Example four Years, and then returned to *Jerusalem*, aged Twenty-one.

'Twas now he began to purify himself from the Pharisaic Corruptions, especially shunning their Hypocrisy, for he was just in all his Dealings, pious without Ostentation; perfect



such Acts of Charity in private, that wheresoe'er he went he obtain'd the Praise of the Rich, and Blessings of the Poor, whose Prayers are most prevailing.

*Nunquam memine me legisse male morte mortuum qui libenter opera caritatis exercuit.* saith St. Hierome; Who ever knew any charitable Person die an ill Death? But that you may be more acceptable with God, *Amare nesciri, & pro nihilo reputari*; that is, Love not Esteem for your good Works; but to proper Objects of your Charity be as much concealed as possible.

How JOSEPH of Arimathæa, became a Disciple.

**AFTER** the Death of our Lord and Saviour, JOSEPH of Arimathæa led a solitary Life for above six Months, in commemoration of the Crucifixion for his Salvation, as well as for the whole Race of Mankind: But his Time of penitency being completed, he came again among the Apostles, and by St. Peter was appointed one of the Seventy-two Disciples.

Then understanding that Felix, who then govern'd Jerusalem had ordered certain noble Christians to be sent to Rome to answer what was objected against them, in Cæsar's Presence; and being desirous of doing them Service, he departed presently for that Imperial City, and was encountered with many Hazards of Sea; for the Ship in which he was, was wrecked in the midst of the Adriatick Sea, about six Hundred of them were forced to swim all Night long, and at Day break a Syranian Vessel came in sight; when he, with certain others, to the Number of Eighty, swimming the Rest, were taken into it and sav'd. He then went to Disarchi, or Patoly, and grew acquainted with Ballistus, a Jew born, who was a Comedian, and in good Repute with the Romans; by whose Means, insinuating himself into the Empress's Knowledge, he determin'd to beseech her to procure the Liberty of those Christians in Bondage there, with all expedition: Which was accordingly done, and being likewise by her enriched with many Gifts, he returned with Honour to his own Country.

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*St. JOSEPH received his Mission to go and preach in Britain  
With an Account of his landing, and the many wonders performed  
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**B**EING now return'd home, and giving a full and good Account to the Twelve Apostles of what Service he had done, and how he had obtained the Christians Liberty at Rome, he was appointed to go and preach the Gospel in Britain. Accordingly he selected his Brother, of the same Name, and ten other venerable Personages in order to assist him in the great and glorious Work he was then a going about. and taking some of that precious Blood, which issued out from our Saviour's Side, he left Jerusalem, and as the Mission commanded him, he took shipping at Joppa, a Seaport Town in Judea, and after some great Difficulty and many Storms, through the Mediterranean Sea, and landed at Barrow Bay, in Somersetshire, and then proceeded eleven Miles further the Day he landed, to Glastonbury in the same County, where fixing his Pilgrim's Staff in the Earth it immediately turn'd to their great Amazement into a blossoming Thorn, as tho' foretelling that the Word of God should flourish within this Kingdom; Much like the Rod of Aaron, which when there was a Contest between him and other learned Jews about the Priesthood, by supernatural Power, bore Flowers, as a Testimony of his divine Election. *Numb. xvii.*

This Miracle made the numerous Spectators, who came to see this Stranger, be very attentive to hear his Preaching the Gospel, which was concerning Christ's Crucifixion for the Redemption of Mankind.

Here (at Glastonbury in Somersetshire, he arriv'd about three Years after the Death of our blessed Redeemer, while Cymbeline reign'd King in Essex, who had been taught by the Druids and Bards to worship Apollo, Belinus, Diana, &c. Gildas tells us, That the Gospel was here publ'sh'd in Tiberius's Reign, by some of the Disciples, or so early as the Year 44, when Simon Zelotes, as saith Nicophorus, suffer'd Martyrdom in England, whose delegated Power was to preach and baptize. *Flavius Dexter, and*  
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*Bracton* *Lexendensis* write That *St. James* was born in 33. JOSEPH was then in the 44th Year of his Age, and doing such wonderful Miracles that he brought to the Faith of Christ above One Thousand Souls. *Eusebius*, *Sombornenes*, and *Ruffinus*, three most faithful Ecclesiastical Writers, relate that he baptiz'd at the City of *Wells* eight Thousand Persons in one Day. So devout, zealous and holy was the Life of JOSEPH of *Arimathea* that altho he found the Inhabitants of this Island very barbarous and superstitious; yet, by wholesome admonitions, he exhorted them to change their erroneous Opinions, representing the Heinousness of their damnable Folly and Blindness, which would be their utter Destruction, both in this World and the next. He seriously exhorted them to change their erroneous Opinion, often Preaching the Word of God to them, and representing a blissful Eternity to all who should persevere in worshipping idolatrous Images, and the Sun, Moon, Stars, and the like: till by his frequent Preaching he brought People to Christianity, the Knowledge of God, and at last the Joys of Heaven.

Thus JOSEPH of *Arimathea*, by his godly Life and exemplary Behaviour, obtained the good will of one *Ethelbertus*, a King then reigning in the western Parts of England, and many of his Nobles, whom he converted to the Christian Faith: He founded a most famous Abby at *Glastenbury*, which was the first Christian Church in the World, and by the large Endowments settled upon it afterwards by other Christian Princes, it became one of the richest Monasteries in Christendom.

The first erection of it was by the twelve Disciples of *St. Philip* and *Jacob* the Apostles, of whom JOSEPH was the Chief. King *Arviragus* gave the Island then call'd *Avilion*. They built the Walls of the Church with Wattles, &c. but afterwards King *Lucius* and others, contributed to erect it of Stone. Several Kings became Benefactors, as *Arthur*, *Athelard*, *Athelstone*, *Baldred*, *Brithred*, *Conwell*, *Cuthred*, *Eaber*, *Edgar*, *Emund*, *Edred*, *Ethelred*, *Edmund*, and *Stephen*, these and many others, with *St. Patrick*, the Patron Saint of the *Irish* Nation, are buried in *Glastenbury*. In that Church one formerly ad



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was first built; and in a Cave, over which was erected a Chap-  
el in Honour of JOSEPH of *Arimathea*, was found the following  
Epitaph.

*Ad Britones qui postquam Christum sepelivi: Dicitur requiesci.*

After I had buried Christ, came to the Britons; I taught them  
and rested.

This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year after our Saviour's Passion; and the  
famous Archbishop *Usher* writes, (from what he thought an au-  
thentick Manuscript) that the said JOSEPH and some of his Com-  
panions, brought with them some of the Blood that flow'd out  
of our dear Redeemer's Side when it was pierced with a Spear  
as it hung on the Cross.

In the ancient Town of *Glastonbury* the holy Apostle, JOSEPH  
of *Arimathea* continued till the Day of his Death, which was  
forty-two Years; so that he was eighty-six Years old when he di-  
ed: And so venerable was his Person held, that six Kings of the  
Western Parts, honoured his Corpse, by carrying him on their  
royal Shoulders to the Grave, in the Chancel of *Glastonbury*  
Abby, and had a most stately Tomb erected over it, with the  
following Inscription.

Here lies the Body of that most holy Disciple recorded in  
Scripture by the Name of JOSEPH of *Arimathea*, and noted by  
the four Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St.  
John, for his generous Affection, in begging the body of our  
blessed Saviour, when crucified to redeem Man from eternall De-  
struction, and burying it in a Tomb of his own making. He di-  
ed July 27. Anno Dom. 45. Aged 86.

After he'd buried Christ, and was amongst Briton's come,  
Him then he taught, then slept, and found a Tomb.

His dear Companions, not very long surviving, were interr'd  
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about him, in or near their Oratory, by his holy Successors  
*Phaganus, Diruvianus* and several others, whose pious Memory  
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The Church-Yard of *Glastenbury*, formerly called *Avalonia*, is  
noted for being the burial Place of the famous and Warlike King  
*Arthur*, whose Sepulchre was sought for by King *HENRY*  
the Second, which was found almost nine Feet under Ground,  
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In the Writings ascribed to St. *Joseph* the Island is called  
*Yssoitria*; styled afterwards *Avalonia* and *Glastenbury* for its Fruit  
and glassy Surface.

More Land was besought, for the Support of the Poor, by a  
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*Of the miraculous white Thorn.*

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noted throughout all Europe for its budding on a *Christmas* Day  
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The Reason is as aforesaid, it was the Staff of *JOSEPH* of *Arima-*  
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where this white Thorn now grows, it grew to what it now is,  
and tho' the Time of Superstition in this Kingdom is abolish'd,  
yet do Thousands of People, of different Opinions, go once a  
Year to see it. it being a most miraculous Curiosity.

This Thorn planted was to show,  
That Christian Faith should here grow,  
And flourish, in a Nation blest,  
With all the Fruits of th' Earth possess'd,  
Near *Glastenbury* it does stand,  
In *Somersetshire's* fair fertile Land:



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*Ad Britones veni postquam Christum sepelivi: Dieri requievi.*

After I had buried *Christ*, came to the *Britons*; I taught them and rested.

This was the 31st Year after our Saviour's Passion? and the famous Archbishop *Usher* writes, (from what he thought an authentick Manuscript) that the said JOSEPH and some of his Companions, brought with them some of the Blood that flow'd out of our dear Redeemer's Side when it was pierced with a Spear as it hung on the Cross.

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And flourish, in a Nation blest,  
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In *Somersetshire's* fair fertile Land:



It buds each Christmas Morn'ng bright,  
Expands at Noon, and fades at Night;  
Which makes the Curious, far and near  
To *Glastenbury* to repair.

By a Letter from *Glastenbury* we hear, that a vast Concourse of People attended the Thorn on Christmas Eve, *New Style*; but to their great Disappointment, there was no Appearance of its blowing, which made them watch it narrowly the 5th of Jan. the Christmas Day, *Old Style*, when it blowed as usual, and in one Day's Time was as white as a Sheet, to the great Mortification of many Families in that Neighbourhood, who had tapp'd their Ale 14 Days too soon.

Many People come beyond Sea to behold it, at its usual Time of this Wonder, which is really supernatural, as being a Matter contrary to the Course of Nature, and make us cry out with the Psalmist, *O Lord, how marvellous are thy Works.*

N. B. Near the Place where the white Thorn stands, there is a Spring of a medicinal Equality; that heretofore did, and still does, cure many Diseases; but the Proprietor formerly being too exact and receive Gratuity from those that used the Water, the Spring thereupon became dry, but now the Water is again restored, and is thought to be nothing inferior to that of Bath or Holywell.

Courteous Reader, If these weighty Considerations are not worth One Penny, keep it Clean, and return it back.

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The Author

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